AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A method of approximating a motion vector for an image block for concealment of a lost or damaged motion vector, comprising the steps of:

deriving a first set of vectors from motion vectors of neighbouring blocks in the same frame and the corresponding block and its neighbouring blocks in one or more preceding and/or subsequent frames;

deriving a set of candidate vectors from one or more of motion vectors of neighbouring blocks in the same frame and the corresponding block and its neighbouring blocks in one or more preceding and/or subsequent frames;

deriving an estimated motion vector from the first set of vectors;

comparing the candidate vectors with the estimated motion vector; and

selecting one of the candidate vectors on the basis of similarity to said estimated vector.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first set of vectors and the set of candidate vectors are the same.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the similarity to the estimated vector is defined in terms of distance, size, or direction.

6. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 5 wherein the vector that is closest or second closest to the estimated vector is selected.

7. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the estimated motion vector is the mean of two or more or all of the elements of said first set.

8. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein the mean is a weighted mean.

9. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 8 wherein motion vectors of neighbouring blocks are weighted according to their position in relation to said image block or their similarity to the motion vector of the block corresponding to said image block in the preceding or subsequent frame.

10. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the selection takes into account motion boundaries.

11-14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A tangible computer-readable medium storing instructions that, when executed, cause a processor to perform a method as claimed in claim 1.

16-17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) A decoder comprising:

data decoding means for decoding received data according a coding technique;

error detecting means for detecting errors in the decoded data; and

a motion vector estimator configured to perform the method of claim 1 or claim 21.

19. (Previously Presented) A receiver for a communication system or a system for retrieving stored data comprising:

a transceiver for transmitting and receiving data; and

a decoder as claimed in claim 18.

20. (Original) A receiver as claimed in claim 19 which is a mobile videophone.

21. (Previously Presented) A method of approximating a motion vector for an image block for concealment of a lost or damaged motion vector, comprising the steps of:

deriving a first set of vectors from motion vectors of neighbouring blocks in the same frame;

deriving a set of candidate vectors from motion vectors of the corresponding block and its neighbouring blocks in one or more preceding or subsequent frames;

determining an overall vector correlation between the vectors of the first set and the vectors of the candidate set; and

approximating the motion vector from one or more of the motion vectors from the first set or candidate set on the basis of the overall vector correlation.

22. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 21 wherein if the vector correlation indicates a high correlation between the first set of vectors and the neighbouring motion vectors in the preceding or subsequent frame of the candidate set then the motion vector of corresponding block in the preceding or subsequent frame is selected as the approximated motion vector.

23. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 21 or claim 22 wherein if the vector correlation indicates a low correlation between the first set of vectors and the neighbouring motion vectors in the preceding or subsequent frame of the candidate set then the motion vector is approximated using motion vectors from the first set of vectors.